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Amendment to the claims:

Claim 1. (Currently Amended): A formulation for enhancing the surface appearance of an infiltrated metal or metal/ceramic composite part comprising:

- (a) a solvent;
- (b) an organometallic binding agent;
- (c) zirconium dioxide; and
- (d) at least one polymer selected from the group consisting of poly(styrene-co-maleic acid), partial sec-butyl/methyl mixed ester; poly(styrene-co-maleic acid), partial 2-butoxy/ethyl mixed ester; and poly(styrene-co-maleic acid), propyl ester, the polymer comprising between about 0.5% to about 4% by weight in the solvent.

Claim 2. (Original): The formulation according to claim 1 wherein the binding agent is selected from the group consisting of titanate and zirconate, and combinations thereof.

Claim 3. (Canceled)

Claim 4. (Currently Amended): The formulation according to ~~claim 3~~ claim 1 wherein the at least one polymer is poly(styrene-co-maleic acid), partial sec-butyl/methyl mixed ester.

Claim 5. (Currently Amended): The formulation according to ~~claim 3~~ claim 1 wherein the solvent is acetone.

Claim 6. (Currently Amended): A formulation for coating the surface of an infiltrated metal or metal/ceramic composite part, the improvement comprising adding to zirconium dioxide at least one of an organometallic binding agent or agent and at least one polymer selected from

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the group consisting of poly(styrene-co-maleic acid), partial sec-butyl/methyl mixed ester; poly(styrene-co-maleic acid), partial 2-butoxy/ethyl mixed ester; and poly(styrene-co-maleic acid), propyl ester.

Claim 7. (Original): The formulation of claim 6 wherein the at least one binding agent is selected from the group consisting of titanate and zirconate, and combinations thereof.

Claim 8. (Canceled)

Claim 9. (Currently Amended): The formulation according to claim 8 claim 6 wherein the at least one polymer is poly(styrene-co-maleic acid), partial sec-butyl/methyl mixed ester.

Claim 10. (Original): The formulation according to claim 6 further comprising a solvent.

Claim 11. (Original): The formulation according to claim 10 wherein the solvent is acetone.

Claim 12. (Withdrawn): A method of inhibiting infiltrant-bleed-through in a metal or metal/ceramic composite part comprising:

- (a) forming a green part;
- (b) coating the part with a surface enhancing formulation; and
- (c) infiltrating the part with a metal infiltrant.

Claim 13. (Withdrawn): The method of claim 12 further comprising using a formulation to coat the green part comprising a solvent, an organometallic binding agent, zirconium dioxide, and at least one polymer.

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Claim 14. (Withdrawn): The method of claim 13 further comprising using a binding agent selected from the group consisting of titanate and zirconate, and combinations thereof.

Claim 15. (Withdrawn): The method of claim 13 further comprising using a polymer selected from the group consisting of polystyrene; two-part epoxy; polymethylmethacrylate; polyvinylacetate; polybutylmethacrylate; polyethylmethacrylate; poly(t-butylacrylate-co-ethylacrylate-co-methacrylic acid); poly(ethylmethacrylate-co-methylacrylate); poly(styrene-co-maleic acid), partial sec-butyl/methyl ester; poly(styrene-co-maleic acid), partial 2-butoxy/ethyl ester; poly(styrene-co-maleic acid), propyl ester; poly(methylvinylether-alt-maleic acid); and poly(ethylene-co-methylacrylate-co-acrylic acid).

Claim 16. (Withdrawn): The method of claim 13 further comprising using poly(styrene-co-maleic acid), partial sec-butyl/methyl ester as the polymer.

Claim 17. (Withdrawn): The method of claim 13 further comprising using acetone as the solvent.